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Regional hearings in preparation for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Hearing held for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at Beirut on 23 and 24 May 1999

Note by the Secretary-General

In preparation for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations and the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and at the request of the Secretary-General, regional hearings have been convened by the executive secretaries of the five regional commissions for a representative segment of civil society, with the participation of members of the commissions. The purpose of the hearings was to produce proposals aimed at strengthening the role of the Organization and ensuring its continued relevance in the twenty-first century. A sixth regional hearing will be held for North America.

The report on the hearing for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held at Beirut on 23 and 24 May 1999, is transmitted herewith.

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Hearing held for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at Beirut on 23 and 24 May 1999

I. Introduction

1. The Hearing for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), held in preparation for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, was convened at United Nations House, Beirut, on 23 and 24 May 1999.

2. Eleven panellists from the ESCWA region were invited to make presentations on the themes selected for the Hearing. Other participants in the Hearing numbered 96. The panellists and participants included representatives from Governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia and the media, as well as a number of public figures; 26 per cent of all panellists and participants were women.

3. The Hearing consisted of four working sessions. Each of the first three sessions was chaired by a moderator. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA chaired the fourth session.

4. The issues selected for discussion were peace and security, economic and social development and human rights and governance. One session was dedicated to each issue. After the introductory statements by panellists, participants took the floor to comment and to contribute their own views and raise new topics. In their interventions, panellists and participants did not necessarily confine themselves to the issue under discussion but often addressed all three issues. A general exchange of views and the conclusion of discussions took place at the fourth and final session. The Executive Secretary introduced the debate by presenting an overview of the ideas expressed in the previous three sessions, after which the chairpersons of the three substantive sessions submitted summaries of the discussions that each had moderated. The floor was then given to the participants.

5. Most of the panellists and participants submitted their interventions in writing. The views contained in the oral interventions and in the written statements of participants are included in the present report.

6. In general, the interventions identified questions of concern for the region as well as for the system of international relations and the United Nations. It was emphasized that a clear correlation existed between the three themes selected for the Hearing. Moreover, it was stressed that development could not be achieved in the absence of peace, security, human rights and freedom. Topics of importance for the future of the region were frequently raised, and in most of the interventions suggestions were made regarding the United Nations of the future. Those suggestions focused on reforming and strengthening the United Nations and on improving the performance of its functions in the service of its Member States and their populations.

7. It is worth noting that, explicitly or implicitly, many of the discussions revolved around the concepts of sovereignty and globalization, and their relationship to respect for national sovereignty and the prerogatives of the State, the welfare and rights of peoples and the role and activities of the United Nations were evoked. The existence of double standards in the international system was also repeatedly emphasized.

8. The concept of absolute sovereignty was defended when discussions centred on peace, security, and the defence or restoration of the territorial integrity of States. It was also evoked, though to a lesser degree, when the formulation and implementation of economic and social public policies were addressed. The relativity of the concept was brought out, however, when discussions focused on human rights, humanitarian action and good governance.

9. Many proposals were made to alter the structure and functions of the United Nations. They revealed a firm belief that greater equality among Member States would produce a more democratic Organization and, hence, inter-State relations that were more just and more respectful of international law. It was considered that the expansion of the functions of the United Nations and the institution of changes in the mandates of its principal organs would contribute to the more rapid development of Member States and greater respect for human rights. Fear that the actual distribution of power in the international system might frustrate some of the objectives of the suggested alterations, or even bring about opposite results by politicizing issues, was also expressed.

10. A suggestion that transcended all three issues concerned the election of the Secretary-General. It was recommended that, in order to guarantee a more democratic selection of the Secretary-General, the Security Council should place more than one candidate before the General Assembly for its vote, and that ways of shielding the Secretary-General from pressure by great Powers should be found.

11. The present report consists of three substantive sections and a section on conclusions. The summary of the Hearing's proceedings is intended to shed light on those areas in which the participants felt the United Nations should be more assertive.

12. The report does not distinguish between the views expressed by panellists and those of the other participants: the term "participants" is used to refer to both. The report reflects the perceptions of the participants, concentrating on ideas echoed by a sufficient number of participants to qualify as a trend in opinion.

II. Peace and security

13. There was an obvious consensus on the peace and security issues of concern to the region and to the United Nations. Opinions also converged on what was seen as the negative impact of the present unipolar international system on the United Nations, whereby observance of the purposes and principles of the Organization were contingent upon the policies and will of one super-Power.

14. Participants emphasized the breach of peace and security that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, including the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, constituted. Mention was made of specific provocations, namely, the expropriation of land owned by Palestinians, the destruction of their houses and Israeli settlement activities in the Palestinian territories. Attention was also drawn to the policies aimed at changing the demographic character of Jerusalem.

15. The General Assembly in its resolutions had repeatedly called upon Israel to put an end to its violations of peace and security in the region. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 were particularly emphasized.

16. The non-compliance by Israel with the terms of these resolutions was repeatedly advanced as an example of the inability of the United Nations to enforce the observance of its principles and to realize its objectives. The Security Council could not impose sanctions on Israel because it was prevented from doing so by the only remaining super-Power. The right to veto Security Council resolutions, exercised or threatened by this super-Power, thus protected Israel.

17. This was in stark contrast to the sanctions imposed upon Iraq. The application of double standards in international relations with regard to Member States of the United Nations could not be better illustrated. Sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Sudan were also assailed.

18. The denunciation of the sanctions imposed upon Iraq did not imply support for the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring States, but was meant to signify that sanctions had been imposed for too long, and that the intended objectives had been achieved. One could argue that while a too-powerful and overly armed Iraq might constitute a threat to peace, security and stability in the region, an equal threat was posed by the current weakness of that country, which undermined the necessary balance in the region.

19. It seemed that United Nations sanctions played doubly to the disadvantage of Arab countries and peoples: they were used against Arab countries that had breached or were perceived to have breached peace and security; however, when the peace and security of Arab countries were breached, sanctions were not imposed upon the perpetrator.

20. It was considered that another example of the application of a double standard related to the differences in the reaction of the United Nations to the treatment by Iraq and Turkey of their Kurdish populations. The imposition of a regime on northern Iraq, purportedly in support of the Kurdish population, constituted a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Incursions by the Turkish army in pursuit of insurgent Kurds from Turkey also represented a clear breach of sovereignty but had not provoked any international action or condemnation.

21. It was also considered that the dispute of some ESCWA member countries with Turkey over the water of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was considered a potential source of instability. Water was also an issue of contention among the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict that might constitute a direct threat to peace both at present and in the future.

22. It was observed that the United Nations had been systematically removed from all efforts directed at settling the Arab-Israeli conflict in the past two decades. Such a situation served the interests of Israel, which could thus avoid the pressure of the international community to respect the Charter of the United Nations and international law, supported by the only remaining super-Power.

23. It was considered that a greater role for the United Nations in the region would be in the best interest of the Arab countries. The region needed the United Nations to help to achieve and maintain peace and security, and the United Nations needed the region to restore its credibility.

24. The question of regional nuclear disarmament was also a source of concern and was advanced as another testimony to the application of double standards. The view was expressed that Israel possessed nuclear weapons and had refused to abide by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It was considered that Israel should be compelled to adhere to the provisions of the Treaty and to renounce its nuclear weapons so that a ban could be placed on all weapons of mass destruction in the region.

25. The arbitrariness, double standards, failure to implement resolutions and other problems inferred above derived from the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The provisions might have applied to the world as it existed after the Second World War and perhaps until the collapse of the Soviet Union, but amendments were now called for. The proposals put forward at the Hearing focused on a more equitable distribution of power and greater democracy in decision-making. Those proposals are reviewed below.

26. A suggestion was made to expand the permanent membership of the Security Council to include representatives of developing countries. Methods of selecting the new permanent members, however, were not addressed.

27. Other recommendations were made to increase the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council and to abolish the right of permanent members to veto resolutions.

28. An additional proposal was to shift part of the mandate of the Security Council to the General Assembly, considered a more democratic organ.

29. There were two approaches to achieving international peace and security. Security Council resolutions, peacekeeping forces and similar mechanisms constituted the direct approach. The indirect approach involved the redistribution of wealth at the international level. Both might be needed in the years to come, but the importance of the latter, it was felt, should not be underestimated.

III. Economic and social development

30. The general principles relating to free market economies were not questioned. It was pointed out that free markets did not mean unbridled markets.

31. The interdependence of world economies was also acknowledged.

32. There was a consensus on the need to place economic and social development at the service of total human development. The refinement of the human development concept was considered a valuable contribution of the United Nations, although it was considered that further elaboration was required.

33. The comments of participants varied in terms of the importance they attached to the positive and negative effects of globalization, the preservation of national markets and sovereign policy-making. Each observation inherently carried an invitation to the United Nations to help States to benefit from available opportunities or resist potential threats or difficulties.

34. Some considered that the conditions required for the success of market economies were lacking. Full or nearly full competition did not exist because of the great disparities between those involved in economic exchanges and in the levels of development of national economies — a situation that was as detrimental to Arab economies as to those of other developing countries.

35. The need to correct the shortcomings in the new world trading system was expressed. Reforms in the international monetary system that took into account the interests of developing countries were also called for.

36. Some considered globalization the most recent stage in the evolution of modes of production, seeing it as a natural process to be benefited from rather than resisted. Globalization presented national economies with real opportunities, and the countries of the region should formulate policies and adopt measures that would allow them to take advantage of those opportunities and develop their economies.

37. It was stressed that the countries of the region should, above all, work to integrate their economies. Regional economic integration was essential if the region were to benefit from economies of scale. Further, a large market could attract foreign direct investment in a way that small national markets could not.

38. Economic integration would also permit the more efficient utilization of regional factors of production; labour could go where capital was available, and regional capital could move in search of workers. The result would be greater returns on factors, economic growth and development.

39. Finally, as the region became more economically integrated, it could gradually secure better terms for its participation in the global economy.

40. The development of human resources was of the utmost importance if the region hoped to benefit from the

opportunities that globalization presented and to withstand the increased competition that accompanied it. In particular, profound reforms were required in education. Traditional educational systems in the region had been unable to satisfy the demands of the labour market and should be abandoned. New educational approaches that took into account the requirements of the more technologically advanced modes of production should be applied to produce a better-educated and more highly skilled labour force.

41. At the same time, a number of participants emphasized the negative consequences of globalization, the liberalization of international trade and the structural adjustment programmes promoted by international financial institutions for developing countries, including those in the region. The region's national economies could not withstand the trade onslaught by industrialized countries. This invasion of goods and services was undermining development opportunities in developing countries. Those holding this view considered that the imposition of structural adjustment programmes by international financial institutions was unacceptable and infringed upon the sovereign rights of States. They considered that those programmes, with their emphasis on reductions in public expenditure, increases in revenue, tight monetary policies, deregulation and privatization, had contributed to increasing unemployment and poverty levels in the region. They could also lead to the denationalization of State economies, which was considered to be contrary to the interests of the Governments and populations of the countries in the region.

42. Although water represented a potential source of conflict and threat to peace in the future, it nonetheless constituted an essential input into production processes. Solving the region's water problems was therefore essential for economic development. As was the case with other problems identified during the Hearing, the United Nations was called upon to contribute to efforts to reach a solution in this area.

43. There was consensus among the participants regarding the importance of social development per se; it was also viewed, along with economic development, democracy and environmental preservation, as a necessary condition both for sustainable development and for the creative contribution of Arab societies to the increasingly globalized community.

44. Improving the status of women and ensuring their full participation in the affairs of society were seen as necessary elements of social development.

45. Social development, defined as the expansion of the collective capacity to take the initiative and face challenges at different local and national levels through participation, mutual trust and solidarity, represented the means of ensuring the success of development efforts. Collective capacity could be measured by the strength of non-governmental organizations.

46. It was mentioned that variations in rates of economic growth within a country or among countries tended to reflect the degree of intensity of the organization of civil society. There was typically a strong positive correlation between the existence of well-developed civil society institutions and economic growth.

47. It was mentioned that a close relationship existed among civil society, governance and development. Development required good governance, with the public sector, the private sector and civil society each playing a role.

48. Member States and civil society institutions were called upon not only to use but to contribute to the further elaboration of the innovative development indicators produced by the United Nations system in the past two decades. In this connection, an invitation was extended to United Nations entities to generate statistics of their own and not to rely on information provided by Governments.

49. The strengthening of civil society would depend in the future on economic growth and development. Membership in non-governmental organizations could not expand where a decent standard of living did not exist. Faced with the prospect of unemployment and poverty, people would seek first to provide for their basic needs.

50. Questions were raised about the role of trade unions as civil society organizations in modern, knowledge-based societies, and about the impact of globalization on trade unions. These questions applied equally to trade unions in Arab countries and those in the rest of the world.

51. Arab civil society was called upon to interact continuously with civil society throughout the world, and to maintain particularly close ties with developed countries. It was emphasized that civil society institutions in the developed world were capable of influencing their Governments with a view to changing their policies.

52. The difficulties associated with locating sources of funding and the information necessary for Arab non-governmental organizations to carry out their activities were pointed out. Mention was made of the accusations that had been levelled against non-governmental organizations regarding the extent to which their work had been influenced by foreign sources of funding. It was also indicated that Governments and non-governmental organizations

sometimes found themselves competing for foreign assistance.

53. Civil society organizations were best qualified to identify problems and to design and implement projects aimed at solving them, either alone or in cooperation with the State. The United Nations, including ESCWA, should support efforts to guarantee non-governmental organizations complete freedom of action at the local and regional levels.

54. The involvement of civil society organizations in United Nations activities had been clearly witnessed during the various world conferences held in the 1990s. This should be seen to represent the beginning of a regular, continuous relationship that should not be limited to preparing for or participating in conferences.

55. It was recommended that the international Organization, as it has existed since 1945, should be revisited. The United Nations needed to adapt itself to new realities and to become more representative of peoples and of civil society at the national and global levels. The tripartite structure of the International Labour Organization had effectively addressed such needs and could serve as an inspiring example.

56. Participants went as far as to suggest the establishment within the United Nations of a general assembly of non-governmental organizations, alongside the intergovernmental General Assembly. Ways of selecting the non-governmental organizations that would sit in that assembly were not addressed.

IV. Human rights and governance

57. The participants agreed that respect for human rights and good governance were necessary conditions for sustainable development.

58. The indivisibility of human rights was stressed. Women's rights, as human rights, were emphasized.

59. The right to development of all nations and peoples was emphasized.

60. The participants affirmed the equal importance of civil and political rights, on the one hand, and of economic, social and cultural rights, on the other.

61. It was stated that the absence of peace constituted a violation of human rights.

62. The victims of war, poverty and illiteracy were seen as further indications of violation of human rights.

63. Religious intolerance was advanced as an example of contempt for fundamental freedoms. Tolerance and the guarantee of the rights of national minorities should be yardsticks for measuring respect for human rights.

64. Discrimination against Arabs in Israel and the denial of their rights, including the right to self-determination, were considered proof of the undemocratic character of Israel, despite claims to the contrary.

65. It was emphasized that the sanctions against Iraq and the suffering they had caused among the Iraqi people, including women, children and the elderly, constituted a massive violation of human rights that amounted to genocide. United Nations sanctions should be imposed to penalize rulers, not populations. The view was expressed that an alternative to the present regime of Iraq should be found.

66. The exploitation of the defence of human rights by great Powers for political purposes was denounced. The application of double standards was noted in this regard. It was considered that the great Powers, in particular the United States of America, had used human rights to satisfy their own political agendas. The United States could not be an arbiter of human rights issues because it had kept itself apart from the international system of protection by refusing to adhere to most international instruments and to recognize the primacy of international human rights laws over its national laws. Such exploitation was, however, not considered to detract from the universal validity of human rights and all efforts to secure and protect them.

67. A close relationship was considered to exist between tyranny and violence. Sovereignty, it was stressed, was an attribute of nations and of peoples who had the right to determine their futures through free and fair elections.

68. Widespread human rights violations were seen as evidence of the failure of the United Nations, and of the system of international human rights protection, in the Arab region. Cultural specificity was not seen as the reason for this failure, because the Arab-Islamic civilization had a well-developed humanistic tradition. The fact was that some in the Arab region had manipulated the concept of cultural specificity to serve their own opportunistic interests.

69. It was mentioned that military might was not the only indicator of power; democracy was an essential component as well. Democracy strengthened States rather than weakening them. Fair elections, the primacy of law and the participation in decision-making by civil society and vulnerable and marginalized groups were manifestations of democracy, as were transparency in public affairs and efforts

to combat corruption. This was the ideal that the countries of the world, including those in the Arab region, should strive for.

70. It was with regard to the issue of governance and human rights that the greatest number of suggestions were made. Proposals relating to peace and security were aimed at strengthening the United Nations in order to enable smaller States to resist the arbitrariness of the great Powers, in particular that of the only remaining super-Power, and to ensure that the Organization could not be used as the instrument of those Powers, while the suggestions pertaining to human rights and governance tended to be far more specific. The participants expressed the hope of seeing the United Nations become an actor that would reinforce the role of civil society in checking the State's tendency towards arbitrariness. The various suggestions made touched, to a greater or lesser extent, upon the concept of sovereignty and are reviewed below. The review begins with those suggestions aimed at merely reinforcing the present human rights regime in the United Nations but gradually incorporates more dramatic suggestions regarding increasing encroachments upon State sovereignty.

71. Governments should be called upon to ratify international conventions on human rights and to submit the required periodical reports on their observance in national law and in practice. Those reports and related discussions should be widely disseminated.

72. The mandate of ESCWA should be expanded to cover human rights, and the topic should be placed on the agenda of the sessions of the Commission. A unit should be created in the secretariat to follow up the implementation of international instruments by member countries and to provide them with advice in this respect. The Commission should serve as a forum in which Governments and non-governmental organizations actively involved in human rights activities would be able to meet. It could be construed from this suggestion that the mandates of all regional commissions should address human rights concerns.

73. Quantitative indicators should be used to assess the respect of human rights by Governments. Cultural considerations could be integrated into those indicators. If human rights ratings fell below a certain level, States would lose their membership in the United Nations.

74. It was considered that the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (commonly known as the Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Activists), adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/144 of 9 December 1998, had to become an international convention in the near future. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and national, regional and international human rights non-governmental organizations should exert pressure on Governments in order to achieve this objective.

75. Non-governmental organizations active in the field of human rights should be placed on an equal footing with States by the reporting system for international conventions. They should be given an enhanced role in the discussion of governmental reports and should be encouraged to present parallel reports of their own.

76. A suggestion was made, in the light of the controversy surrounding the foreign sources of funding for human rights non-governmental organizations in Arab and other countries, that a United Nations fund should be established to support these organizations in order to guarantee transparency. It was considered that such non-governmental organizations were entitled to United Nations resources, which consisted of the contributions of Member States to the budget of the Organization — contributions paid from the revenues accruing to States from the taxes collected from citizens.

77. The drafting and adoption of an international convention on the respect of human rights in the foreign policies of States was suggested. States should respect human rights both internally and in the international domain.

78. The United Nations was called upon to launch a campaign for the signing and ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17 July 1998. The entry into force of the Statute was seen by some participants as a means of guaranteeing the respect of human rights.

79. The disregard shown for the concept of sovereignty was challenged when a suggestion was put forward relating to the adoption of an international convention on the extradition of persons indicted for suspected human rights violations. Adherence to such a convention should be made compulsory for all States at an undetermined point in the future.

80. The role of United Nations organs in charge of ensuring the respect of human rights should not be confined to investigating presumed violations and to the publication of the results of investigations. Such organs should be given a mandate to intervene in cases in which it has been established that violations have taken place. (No elucidation was provided with regard to the type of intervention that would be required or the power that the organs would be given to enforce their decisions.)

81. A suggestion was made to expand the mandate of the Security Council to cover human rights questions. The Security Council should not be merely informed of the activities of the organs dealing with human rights in the United Nations. It should adopt a more active approach that would include the actual investigation of complaints. In this area, the Security Council would adopt resolutions by simple majority, without the right to veto. An objection was expressed in this regard, however. There was some concern that the members of the Security Council — especially the most powerful among them — might end up politicizing human rights and applying double standards in accordance with their own interests. It was suggested that a special organ should be created, whose members' competence and independence could be guaranteed. In either case, the supranational character of the Security Council or the new organ was an obvious advantage, as was the compulsory nature of the investigations. Mere membership in the United Nations would allow either body to carry out the required investigations; the explicit adherence of a State to a specific, internationally binding legal instrument would not be necessary.

V. Conclusions

82. Anger at the inability of the United Nations to restore the rights of the Palestinian people and to defend the territorial integrity of a number of Arab States formed the backdrop to the debates at the Hearing. It was considered that this constituted the Achilles heel of the Organization in the region. This special situation and the feelings and reactions associated with it distinguished the ESCWA region from other regions.

83. Other sources of frustration, which were certainly not unique to the region, included underdevelopment, the perceived unfairness of the international economic system, and the unsatisfactory human rights situation.

84. Despite these feelings and criticisms, support for the United Nations and the ideals it embodied was evident in all of the interventions and suggestions. Most of the criticisms levelled at the Organization related to its failure or inability to do what it should to enforce respect for its principles and fulfil the purposes for which it was created. Critics of the United Nations did not question its role or seek to weaken it; rather, they wished to reinforce it.

85. In the area of peace and security, the great Powers, and most notably the United States, were blamed for the marginalization and weakness of the United Nations.

86. In the area of human rights and governance, the undemocratic State was blamed for failing to respect human rights.

87. In the area of economic and social development, shortcomings were seen to derive from both the marginalization of the United Nations and the undemocratic character of the State.

88. When the emphasis was on peace and security, the participants emphasized that reinforcing the United Nations required the democratization of the Organization. One of the main objectives was to keep the Organization from being the instrument of any great Power.

89. The democratization of internal political systems and societies was also needed in order to guarantee the observance of human rights and the exercise of good governance. Civil society wished to see the Organization as an actor that supported their aspirations within such a framework.

90. Economic and social development should automatically flow from democratization at the internal and international levels. Fairer policy-making processes at both levels would produce policies that reflected the interests and satisfied the needs of the weakest as well as the most powerful in society.

91. Other suggestions concerning economic and social development related to policies and the institutional reinforcement of society. In the final analysis, democratization represented the broadest objective of the proposals made at the Hearing.

Annex I

Hearing for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in preparation for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Programme of work

Sunday, 23 May 1999

8:30-9:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00-9:30 a.m.	Opening of the Hearing
	Statement by Hazem El-Beblawi, Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
	Statement by Miles Stoby, Assistant Secretary-General, Coordinator of Preparations for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations
9:30-10:15 a.m.	First session, on peace and security (Chairman, Lakhdar Brahimi)
	Introductory statements: Adnan Omran Ghassan Salame
10:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Discussions
3:00-4:00 p.m.	Second session, on economic and social development (Chairman, Ismat Kittani)
	Introductory statements: Nayla Moawad Saddedine Ibrahim Hoda Badran
4:00-4:30 p.m.	Discussions
5:00-6:15 p.m.	Discussions (concluded)

Monday, 24 May 1999

9:30-10:15 a.m.	Third session, on human rights and good governance (Chairman, Mohsen Al-Aini)
	Introductory statements: Leila Sharaf Ghassan Toueini Ali Omlil
10:15-11:00 a.m.	Discussions
11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Discussions (concluded)
3:00-5:00 p.m.	Review of discussions and conclusions (Chairman, Hazem El-Beblawi)

Annex II

List of panellists and participants

Hearing for the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in preparation for the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, Beirut, 23 and 24 May 1999

A. Members of the Commission

Egypt

Adel Abdel Monhem Al-Khodary
Ambassador, Embassy of Egypt

Yehia Negm
Third Secretary, Embassy of Egypt

Iraq

Hicham Abdul-Razzak
First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Jordan

Anmar Al-Hammoud
Ambassador, Embassy of Jordan

Oman

Mohammed Bin Khalil Jazmi
First Secretary, Embassy of Oman

Palestine

Samih Hussein Abd Karakra
Deputy, Ministry of Planning and Cooperation

Mohammed Ghadayah
General Manager, Associations Construction and Human Resources
Ministry of Planning

Qatar

Ahmed Saleh Al-Mehnadi
Head of Economic and International Relations
Ministry of Finance, Economy and Commerce

Mohamed Nasr Al-Nasr
Director, Department of International Organizations, Conferences and Treaties, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ali Moubarak Al-Mehnadi
Embassy of Qatar

Saudi Arabia

Khalid Aboheimed
Supervisor, Planning and Scientific Policies

Mohammed Al-Haizan
Specialist on the economy
Ministry of Finance and the National Economy

Syrian Arab Republic

Ibrahim Issa
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yemen

Abdullah Ali Al-Muhalwi
Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Yemen

B. Panellists

Mohsen Al-Aini (Yemen)
Former Prime Minister

Hoda Badran (Egypt)
Alliance for Arab Women

Lakhdar Brahimi (Algeria)
Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Layla Charaf (Jordan)
Member of Parliament

Saadeddine Ibrahim (Egypt)
Ibn Khaldun Centre for Development Studies

Ismat Kittani (Iraq)
Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Nayla Mouawad (Lebanon)
Member of Parliament
Rene Mouawad Association

Adnan Omran (Syrian Arab Republic)
Former Assistant Secretary-General
League of Arab States

Ali Oumlil (Morocco)
University Professor

Ghassan Salame (Lebanon)
Professor, Paris University

Ghassan Tweini (Lebanon)
Editor, *An-Nahar*

C. Media and public figures

Egypt

Hussein Ahmed Amin
Writer

Iraq

Adeeb Al-Jader
Former Minister

Jordan

Taher Hamdi Kanaan
Former Minister

Lebanon

Kamal Chehade
Adviser to the Minister of the Economy

Monah El-Solh
President, Dar Al-Nadwa

Edward Ghorra
Ambassador

Elias Saba
Public figure

Talal Salman
Journalist, *As-Safir*

Tahani Sendian Tleiss
Lawyer's Syndicate

Palestine

Youssef Sayegh
Economist

Syrian Arab Republic

Hekmat Nabelsi
Public figure

Yemen

Abdullah Al-Alem
Consultant

D. Research institutions

Iraq

Kheireddin Hassib
Centre of Arab Unity Studies

Farhang Jalal
Adviser on industrial promotion and management

Jordan

Sami Sonna'a
Consultant, Middle East Institute for Managing Agricultural Resources

Lebanon

Najla Hamadeh
Lebanese Association of Women's Research

Adeeb Nehmeh
Consultant on social development

Riad Tabbara
Development Studies Centre

Syrian Arab Republic

Nabil Sukkar
Managing Director, Syrian Consulting Bureau for Development and Investment

E. Academics

Egypt

Fathi Mohammed Abou-Ayana
President of Beirut Arab University

Abdul Fattah Mansour
University Professor

Samir Tanago
Professor, Alexandria University

Jordan

Mostafa Hamarneh
Director, Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan

Kuwait

Khaldoun Nakib
Professor, Kuwait University

Lebanon

Roger Assaf
Professor and Director
Saint Joseph University

Fahmeya Charafeddine
Professor, Lebanese University

Assad Diab
President, Lebanese University

Dalal El-Bizri
Professor, Lebanese University

Fadia Kiwan
Professor, Lebanese University

Samir Makdisi
Professor, American University of Beirut

Mohammed Shaya
Dean of Social Science, Lebanese University

Palestine

Ali Khashaan
Dean, Jerusalem-Palestinian School of Law
Al-Quds University

Saudi Arabia

Samira Islam
Professor, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences
King Abdul-Aziz University

Syrian Arab Republic

Bouthaina Chaaban
University Professor

F. Non-governmental organizations

Bahrain

Sabika Al-Najjar
Awal Women Society

Egypt

Taher El-Taher Shash
Arab Organization for Human Rights

Mohamed Mahmoud El-Said
Arab Non-governmental Organization Network for Environment and Development

Samar Labbad
Executive Director, Arab Society of Certified Accountants

Mohamed El-Sayed Said
Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies

Jordan

Emilie Nafaa
President, Arab Women Organization of Jordan

Ghaleb Barakat
Institute for Planetary Synthesis

Shadia Nusseir
Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development

Lebanon

Hassan Merhbi
Assistant General Secretary, Arab Lawyers Union

Toufic Ousseiran
Committee Coordinator of non-governmental organizations in Lebanon

Layla Baalbaki Harb
Vice President, Lebanese Association for Human Rights

Wa'el Kheir
Executive Director, Lebanese Association for Human Rights

Norma Melhem
Lawyer, Lebanese Association for Human Rights

Alice Keyrouz Sleiman
Lawyer, Lebanese Association for Human Rights

Ezzeddine Ezzeddine
Executive Director, Lebanese Association for the Welfare of the Handicapped

Linda Matar
President, Lebanese Council of Women

Malek Ghandour
Lebanese Environment Forum

Layla Salhab Karami
President, Lebanese Working Women's Association

Habib Abou Nafeh
Middle East Coordination of Catholic Students' Movement

Jean Younes
Coordinator, Middle East Coordination of Catholic Students' Movement

Wafa'a Bchara
Legal Adviser, Renaissance Women's Gathering

Zaheya Hitti
Adviser, Renaissance Women's Gathering

Moussa Charafeddine
General Secretary, Union of Organizations for the Mentally Handicapped

Alia Al-Husseini
National Coordinator, World Conservation Union

Farouk Mawlawi
Regional Director, World Information Transfer

Elias Metri El-Halabi
World Students' Christian Federation

Palestine

Izzat Abdul Hadi
Bissan Centre for Research and Development

Souheil El-Natour
President, Palestinian Cultural Democratic Forum

Saudi Arabia

Farida Allaghi
Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations

Syrian Arab Republic

Souad Bakkour
President, Syrian General Federation for Women

Yemen

Amal Basha
Sisters Arab Forum

G. Private sector

Lebanon

Elias Ghantous
Assistant Secretary General
General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Arab Countries

Fouad Sayed Ahmed
General Secretary, Union of Arab Banks

H. United Nations system of organizations

United Nations

Sulafa Al-Bassam
Chief, Regional Commissions, New York Office

Habib El-Habr
Deputy Regional Director
Regional Office for Western Asia, United Nations Environment Programme

Tanja Thonhauser
Associate Protection Officer
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Christian de Clercq
Senior Adviser, United Nations Development Programme

Haifa Shaker Abu Ghazaleh
Regional Programme Adviser
United Nations Development Fund for Women

Atef Mohammed Khalifa
Director, Country Support Team for Arab States and Europe
United Nations Population Fund

Ahuja Kumar Rajendra
World Food Programme

Specialized agencies

Azita Berar-Awad
Deputy Director, International Labour Organization

Omar Ben Ramdhane
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Mohammad Ishaq Al-Khawashky
Special Adviser to the Regional Director
World Health Organization

Abdelhay Mechbal
World Health Organization

Ezzedin Shamsedin
Adviser to Executive Director, World Bank

Mahdi Al-Hafedh
United Nations Industrial Development Organization